

LIFE PROJECT: "DISCURSIVE LISTENING" OF PNLD 2021 TEACHING BOOKS

PROJETO DE VIDA: "ESCUTA DISCURSIVA" DE LIVROS DIDÁTICOS DO PNLD 2021

PROYECTO DE VIDA: "ESCUCHA DISCURSIVA" DE LOS LIBROS DE ENSEÑANZA DEL PNLD 2021

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ABSTRACT

This study proposes a discussion about the memory materialized in the texts of the PNLD 2021 Life Project text books. Supported by Materialistic Discourse Analysis, it implied gestures that, committed to the search for understanding the movements of (de)stabilization of the senses, allowed us to infer that the authors identification with a Meritocratic DF resulted in the creation of effects of a sense of protagonism, promise of possibility and student responsibility. DF constitutes a Marketing-Educational FI that makes individual responsibility for success or failure obvious and produces a silencing of inequalities and injustices.

Keywords: Speech; Education; PNLD; Life project; Meritocracy.

RESUMO

Este estudo propõe a discussão sobre a memória materializada nos textos de apresentação de livros didáticos de Projeto de Vida do PNLD 2021. Respalado na Análise de Discurso Materialista, implicou gestos que, comprometidos com a busca de compreensão dos movimentos de (des)estabilização dos sentidos, permitiram depreender que a identificação dos autores com uma FD Meritocrática resultou na constituição de efeitos de sentido de protagonismo, promessa de possibilidade e responsabilização do estudante. A FD constitui uma FI Mercadológica-Educacional que torna óbvia a responsabilidade individual sobre sucesso ou fracasso e produz um silenciamento de desigualdades e injustiças.

Palavras-chave: Discurso; Educação; PNLD; Projeto de vida; Meritocracia.

RESUMEN

Este estudio propone una discusión sobre la memoria materializada en los textos de los libros de texto del Proyecto de Vida del PNLD 2021. Apoyado en el Análisis Materialista del Discurso, implicaba gestos que, comprometidos con la búsqueda de comprensión de los movimientos de la (des)estabilización de los sentidos, permitió inferir que la identificación de los autores con un DF Meritocrático resultó en la creación de efectos de sentido de protagonismo, promesa de posibilidad y responsabilidad estudiantil. DF constituye una IF Marketing-Educativa que hace evidente la responsabilidad individual por el éxito o el fracaso y produce un silenciamento de las desigualdades e injusticias.

Palabras clave: Habla; Educación; PNLD; Proyecto de vida; Meritocracia.

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OPENING REMARKS

This research focuses on the memory as represented in the Life Project (Projeto de Vida) textbooks distributed for use by high school students by the Brazilian Textbook Program (Programa Nacional do Livro Didático, PNLD) in 2021. It attempted to comprehend the dynamics of stabilizing and destabilizing meanings within the realm of educational memory, from which the following specific objectives were derived: To facilitate the ‘discursive listening’ for the Life Project textbooks distributed by PNLD in 2021; To identify the relationships between meaning, significance, and foresight within the introductory texts of the Life Project textbooks; To gain insight into the dynamics of discursive repetition.

PNLD 2021 encompasses a selection of twenty-four Life Project books, from which teachers working in public schools across Brazil can make their choices. These books can be accessed on the website <https://www.edocente.com.br/>, a dedicated education content portal for teachers, maintained by publishing companies Ática, Scipione, Saraiva, and Atual. Given that the selection of textbooks is made by schools, publishers undertake various initiatives to promote their books and boost sales, which result in billion-dollar contracts³ signed with the Federal Government. On the initiative of the aforementioned publishers, only five books were physically distributed at the state school in Rio Grande do Sul with which we were linked until the end of 2021. The introductory texts for the five books are included in our research archive.

The theoretical and methodological foundation upon which this research is built is rooted in Materialist Discourse Analysis, as established by Michel Pêcheux. The term “discursive listening” (LEANDRO FERREIRA, 2003) in the context of textbooks pertains to the utilization of concepts specific to Discourse Analysis. This category, as articulated in Leandro Ferreira's work (2003), has circulated among analysts who employ it while shaping their interpretive approaches within the *corpus*. In discussing the “conceptual family of the subject” and emphasizing the presence of a collection of terms that reiterates the idea that the subject is subject to determinations of various natures, Leandro Ferreira suggests that discourse analysts engage in “discursive listening:”

[...] in the form of a gesture of interpretation, it also goes in the same direction to demand from the discourse analyst a ‘listening’ work that consists of making the reader see the ‘opacity’ of the text from the lenses of a theoretical-analytical device, denaturalizing what is not natural, and calling into question what seems evident and bringing to light what is seemingly absent. (LEANDRO FERREIRA, 2003, p. 8)

Highlighting the core concept that revolves around the recognition and comprehension of disruptions in the networks of meanings, Prawucki, drawing inspiration from Leandro Ferreira and guided by his insights, while proposing a study on the interconnections between the body, media, and society in the written expressions of high school students, clarifies that the objective of discursive listening in his research is to “[...] relate the constitutive heterogeneity ‘of’ saying [how the socio-historical-ideological exterior is present within the subject’s language] with the

³ As of May 2021, data reveals that a total of BRL 1,390,201,035.55 were invested in the overall number of copies purchased (source: <https://www.fnnde.gov.br/programas/programas-do-livro/pnld/statistic-data>).

heterogeneity shown ‘in’ saying [different linguistic ways of the subject, always insufficiently, denying the constitutive heterogeneity]” (2011, p. 46).

Melo and Costa (2014) bring “discursive listening” closer to interviews, explaining that its purpose is to fathom how individuals (as interviewees) engage with and assimilate institutionalized or non-institutionalized discourses, and whether they replicate or deviate from them, which unfolds in a continuous process of paraphrasing and metaphorization. Santos and Beck (2019) advocate for the practice of “discursive listening” to the silence that unravels that which has already been expressed. In doing so, they establish a conditional relationship between such a gesture and two analytical moments, also emphasizing that “discursive listening” must “take into account the perceptions of the speaking subject.” This allows for the description of this gesture in terms of what may be of interest in it, leading to the “stabilized, gregarious” interpretation (SANTOS; BECK, 2019, p. 148-149). Simultaneously, it is important to acknowledge that the discourse analyst’s interpretive gestures cannot be overlooked, mainly because the analyst is exposed to the intricacies of language, and the potential for misunderstandings, which are inherent to the process of constructing meanings within their material conditions. Fiss and Vieira (2021) integrate “discursive listening” with gestures in which the analyst carefully examines the words of the research participants, taking into account the conditions of production and scrutinizing the processes through which subjects and meanings are (de)constructed, all while keeping in mind the inherent heterogeneity of the speech.

All works consulted converge on a common theme that establishes a strong connection: “discursive listening” represents an interpretive gesture that aims to unveil the opacity of the text, bringing to light that which is missing, and denaturalizing what may initially seem self-evident. By “listening” and engaging in a discursive analysis of the introductory texts within the Life Project textbooks distributed by PNLD in 2021, we believe it will be possible to decipher a portion of the workings of the discourse underpinning curricular practices in Brazil.

The significance of this topic lies in its potential to contribute to the update of memory within both the realm of education and the field of DA. Moreover, the significance of this study extends to comprehending the discursive positions adopted by individuals and their processes of alignment with conflicting networks of meaning, as well as producing stimulating reflection on the theory itself. Additionally, this may be perceived as another objective: to conduct a study using the theoretical framework of Discourse Analysis (DA), always bearing in mind that, as emphasized by Indursky, “[...] theory is the basis of the analyses, which, in turn, feed back to the theory” (2008, p. 9).

REFERENCES AND CONNECTIONS

Discourse, as “a point of convergence for ideological processes and linguistic phenomena” (ORLANDI, 1995, p. 54), invariably emanates from specific conditions of production (CPs). Pêcheux ([1969] 2019), in his discussion of the structural elements of the conditions of production, delves into the concept of the referent (the context), imaginary formations (the mental images individuals construct of themselves, others, and the roles they play), and the enunciative positions assumed by

subjects within discourse. Furthermore, the author clarifies that these elements are inherently composed of (a) Power relations existing between opposing elements in a given field; (b) Relations of meaning, as all discourse is built from prior discourses; (c) Relations of anticipation, where the speaker or writer seeks to place themselves in the position of the listener, anticipating potential reactions and representations from the interlocutors. In this process, patterns of repetition emerge, signifying what holds significance for a particular social group.

When considered through Courtine's perspective (2014), it is essential to remember that the conditions of production are indicative of the socio-historical context in which the discourse emerges, without sidestepping the inherent contradictions that shape it. The author reinterprets the Marxist concept of contradiction, relocating it within the realm of discourse. This move proves to be highly valuable when considering its interconnections with the processes of meaning production, as it is closely linked to a principle of historical development within discourse, firmly entrenched in the linguistic materiality of discursive formation, which, under specific circumstances, relates to what Courtine may have bequeathed to us as the unyielding commitment of a discourse analyst: "[...] to identify, through productions and changes in discourse, the imprinted effect of ideological class contradictions in the materiality of discourses" (2014, p. 68). The relationships of force, anticipation, and meaning delineated by Pêcheux held particular significance for the analysis carried out. However, while the primary focus in the DA is the understanding of how meaning operates within meaning through the analysis of the interplay between expression and its conditions of production, it is essential to acknowledge that the discourses under examination emerged in a historical period where representatives of the mandated curriculum (the legal-administrative framework that articulates educational policy in a country) formed alliances with representatives of the curriculum presented to teachers. This collaboration aimed to implement curricular practices aligned with the Base Nacional Comum Curricular (National Common Curricular Base), which was officially approved in 2017. Furthermore, in alignment with Courtine's arguments and the reflection on PCs, it is pertinent to consider our interest in exploring the subject positions articulated within the utterances.

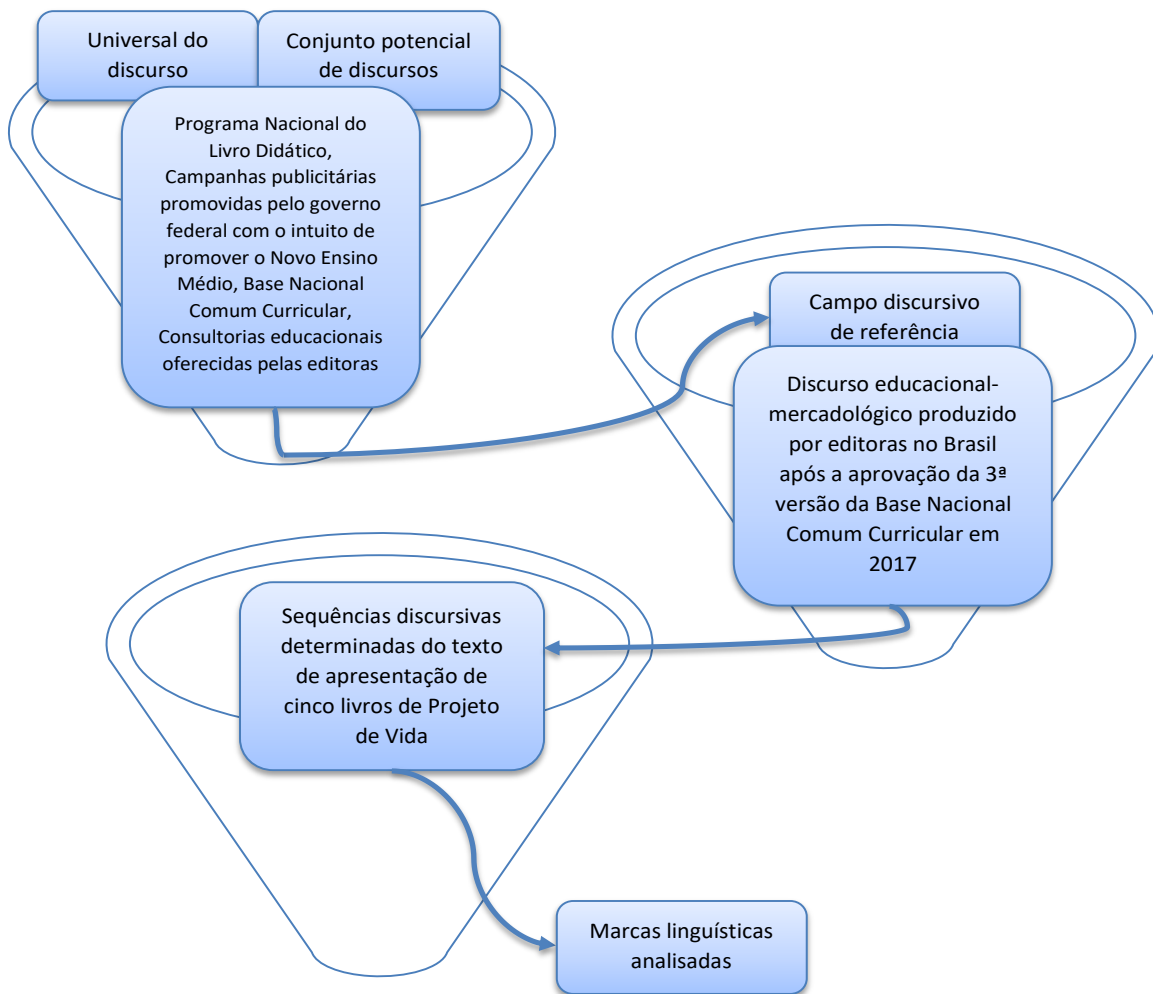
It is crucial to recognize that the DA file is a dynamic entity. The analyst selects the foundational materials for crafting their analytical framework within the interplay of considerations regarding what should or should not be included, with the option for continuous expansion:

[...] the archive comprises not only the elements it presently holds but also those it may accrue over time, influenced by factors that advocate for the inclusion of what was previously omitted and the reinterpretation of what managed to gain entry, leading to the naturalization and establishment of stability. It is also relevant that the omission of certain elements from the archive resonates through their 'present-absence.' (MITTMANN, 2015, p. 353)

Continuing with the discussion of the archive and the creation of the *corpus*, we draw upon insights proposed by Jean-Jacques Courtine. The author characterizes a discursive corpus as "[...] a collection of discursive sequences, organized following a framework determined concerning specific conditions governing Production Conditions (CP) of the discourse" (COURTINE, 2014, p. 54). This encompasses three key dimensions: the selection of materials, criteria for constitution, and overall form. As previously explained, we have selected the introductory texts of five Life Project books for

analysis as our primary source material. We have gathered discursive sequences (DSs) to create the *corpus*. If its collection is thought of as a “funnel” or “filter,” as proposed by the author, it becomes apparent that it can be linked to a “universal of discourse” from which the “discursive field of reference” is extracted, and within this field, specific discursive sequences are isolated (see Figure 1):⁴

Figure 1: Constitution of the discursive *corpus*



Source: material produced by the researchers

The *corpus* can be structured according to a plan defined by a set number of dimensions, which then determine its form. Taking into consideration this structural plan from the dimensions elaborated by Courtine, we can observe that: (a) The *corpus* comprises numerous discursive sequences, each extracted from the introductory texts of five different Life Project books; (b) These speeches are authored by multiple individuals, who may have composed the presentation

⁴ Material produced by researchers based on a representation proposed by Jussana Daguerre Lopes (2021).

texts individually or collaboratively with other book authors, all aiming for a homogeneous ideological stance.

Motivated by the quest to comprehend the concept of repeatability and its role in analytical practices, all the while acknowledging the perpetual presence of the 'other' in discourse, we read the archive⁵ with the intent of constructing a *corpus*, which is envisioned as a resource that can provide insights into the functioning of discourses and facilitate their understanding.

REPEATABILITY

When revisiting the paths charted by Pêcheux ([1983] 2015) and Orlandi (1993; 1996), Silveira (2018) echoes these scholars by asserting that “[...] the boundary between paraphrase and polysemy is neither self-evident nor permanent” (p.41). Disruptions in the web of meanings maintain a certain connection to it, allowing for a return to what has already been articulated. Calil (1995), on the other hand, without directly addressing polysemy and paraphrase, delves into the discourse surrounding a process of repetition with differences, in which meanings “shift to another location, shedding an already-given meaning to become whole again” (p. 153). According to him, it is the element of difference that results in the relocation of certain meanings beyond the discourse, outside specific discursive formations. This perspective suggests that it is within the polysemic process that room is created for disturbances that, by incorporating new meanings into what has already been articulated, ultimately preserve it. Therefore, the paraphrastic process would be responsible for the construction of dikes that would try to prevent the flow of senses—which also works as a means of support for that which has already been spoken. Repetition is not merely the act of restating something with identical words; it is the art of eliciting a similar effect of meaning differently. In this process of reiteration, what has been expressed will never be articulated in the same way, thus opening the door for potential change.

This mechanism of repetition resides in a territory somewhat akin to paraphrastic and polysemic relations. Repetition can manifest in three distinct forms: “empirical repetition (a mnemonic exercise that lacks historicization); formal repetition (a technique for constructing sentences, a grammatical exercise that similarly lacks historicization); historical repetition (which embeds the saying within [...] interdiscourse)” (ORLANDI, 1996, p. 70).

We present a collection of sentences excerpted from the file below, with linguistic elements underlined:

DS1: “Your active participation is indispensable so that everything goes well. Ultimately, it is your life, and **no one else can live it on your behalf.**” (Book 1)

DS2: “So, in this book, we’re going to start from where you are and who you are to get to where you want to be and who you dream of being in the future. The path may be lengthy, at times straightforward, at times challenging, but it will ultimately **be rewarding.**” (Book 2)

DS3: “You must introspect and identify your own talents, aspirations, and needs. Additionally, always keep an eye on your surroundings; while reality may prove limiting in many forms, **there are undoubtedly ways to find paths for personal fulfillment.**” (Book 3)

⁵ It is important to clarify that in DA, the concept of reading takes on a different meaning, involving, as Orlandi points out, a “shift in the reader’s position to the place constructed by the analyst” (2020, p. 61). This shift allows for an understanding of the process of meaning production within its conditions, going beyond the effects of apparent meanings and subjects, the transparency of language, and subjectivity.

DS4: “We hope that it helps you to recognize who you are and who you want to be in the future so that **you can build** a lifestyle that brings personal fulfillment, imbues your life with purpose, and inspires you to contribute to a fair, equitable, and dignified society for everyone.” (Book 4)

DS5: Within these pages, you **will not find** prepackaged solutions or well-worn routes, but rather **opportunities to become** the protagonist of your own story.” (Book 5)

In all discourses, we can discern the recurring theme that individuals bear the responsibility for the outcomes of their life trajectories. It is believed that by actively participating in the construction and execution of their life projects, they will achieve their dreams and objectives. This concept resonates with Pêcheux when he asserts that the “[...] discursive process does not inherently possess a beginning: discourse is always constructed upon a preceding discourse, which it regards as raw material” ([1975] 2014, p. 76). Therefore, all materiality carries a series of discursive traits that connect it to previous and external statements — Success can be achieved through effort, provided the necessary conditions are met, and the subject can shape their own destiny with their own hands. Academic success or failure is solely the responsibility of the student. These markers function as indicators, offering clues to the relationship between discourse and repeatability, as circulating discourses are adopted, and their meanings are standardized through repetition.

As elucidated by Lopes (2021), drawing from Courtine (2014), the “[...] memory effect (stemming from the interdiscourse/intradiscourse relationship) reinvigorates the heterogeneity of discourse within its apparent homogeneity” (p. 51), prompting the analyst to engage in discursive listening to discern the connections between what is expressed within the discursive sequence and what is articulated in other discourses, as all discursive production circulates previously expressed formulations. In alignment with Lopes (2021), the impact of current events is intricately tied to the workings of memory. By rekindling a past event in a contemporary context, memory updates it, giving rise to a form of dialogue between discursive sequences, which are not only spoken and responded to but can also be contested or referenced. Over time, the notions of the student as the protagonist in the knowledge production process and the student bearing sole responsibility for their actions have circulated within educational discourses. Now, they are interwoven in textbooks to shape a ‘self-entrepreneurial individual’ who adapts to the production relations as defined within a capitalist social framework, believing it to be a voluntary choice.

The five DSs under examination yield a similar effect of meaning, indicating their interconnection. Moreover, they can be interpreted as exemplifying how the alignment of the authors of the analyzed introductory texts with a specific discursive formation results in the establishment of a distinct subject position and a particular meaning associated with the Life Project component, engendering a **sense of protagonism, the promise of possibilities, and student accountability**. It is important to note another meaning effect identified in works authored by Luciana Nogueira and Juciele Pereira Dias (2017; 2018), and Jussana Daguerre Lopes (2021): the meaning effect of self-entrepreneurship, which suggests that individuals must take on an entrepreneurial role independently.

We thus can discern the operation of a Discursive Formation (DF) that we shall refer to as the Meritocratic DF, one that influences the content of Books 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, here under scrutiny,

and with which the subject aligns. In this instance, through introductory texts that shape the meanings of life, reward, possibility, creation, and opportunity. All of them represent a Market-Educational Ideological Formation (IF) which makes individual responsibility for the success of the life project evident, given that

Table 1 – REPETITION IN THE SUBJECT’S SPEECH

by stating that	it is possible to comprehend that it is also being conveyed that
“no one else can live it on your behalf,”	achieving success relies on you, as it hinges upon “your involvement” and “engagement”—fundamental dispositions, imperative for everything to “go well.”
“it will be rewarding”	you will attain some form of recompense for your exertion, given that “the journey may also be protracted, at times straightforward, and at times arduous and intricate.” Hence, in light of the proclamation of the potential of a “lengthy, demanding, and intricate path,” it is tacitly implied that this journey will solely yield rewards if you’ve dedicated the requisite effort to navigate a route that is at times steep and winding.
“there are undoubtedly ways to find paths for personal fulfillment”	all that the student must do is take action or, in other words, “introspect, identify their abilities, aspirations, and needs” and “observe their surroundings.”
“you can build”	it is in your hands since it is the student’s responsibility to recognize who they are and “who they want to be in the future.”
“you will find [...] opportunities to become the protagonist of your own story”	based on your unique circumstances. In other words, the textbook is not designed as a step-by-step guide for students to adhere to but as a catalyst for encouraging active involvement, providing tools for this purpose. Consequently, the student has the option to decide whether they want to be the “protagonist of their own narrative.”

Source: material produced by the researchers

THE PERPETUAL PRESENCE OF THE OTHER

Through the analysis conducted, it is plausible to establish connections between what is articulated within the DS and that which is articulated in other discourses. We function as conveyors of other forms of knowledge and are influenced by pre-existing knowledge structures through our identification with a universal subject (subject of DF knowledge). This connection is instrumental in both constructing a superficial uniformity and in shifts in meaning. As Fiss rightly points out, “Heterogeneity [...] is associated with the incompleteness of the subject, with difference [...] which becomes an integral part of the inherent heterogeneity, as articulated prior/externally to the existence of any utterance” (2003, p. 172).

The discourse underscores, amid its words, the peculiar presence of terms identified as originating from another discourse. Due to the inherent permeability of each word, it is always imbued with the discourses it has absorbed, thereby revealing the existence of another discourse with which it fundamentally intersects. In this regard, and in line with Fiss, we recall that “[...] heterogeneity implies working not only with what is said but also with that which remains unsaid. In other words, alternative interpretations that may have been omitted but persist as latent elements within the discursive processes” (2003, p. 104), as seen in DS3.

DS3: “You must introspect and identify your own talents, aspirations, and needs. Furthermore, it is imperative to be attentive to your surroundings, as reality may impose **several constraints**, but even in the face of such limitations, **it is certainly possible** to find avenues leading to personal fulfillment.” (Book 3)

The contradiction, considered from the understanding of Courtine (2014), between “several constraints” and “it is certainly possible” reveals that within the discourse of the life project, there are other narratives beyond the pledge of social mobility, personal fulfillment, and meritocracy. The discourse acknowledges the existence of limitations. But what remains unspoken when this acknowledgment is made? It raises the possibility that meritocracy might be flawed. In a system grounded in the exchange of commodities and the accumulation of capital, individual effort alone might not suffice to propel students to their desired outcomes. This ambiguity of meanings resurfaces when it is stated that one can chart their course “despite them”— that is, the constraints. One of the possible deviations that highlights the power relations that exist in disputes over meanings.

Other voices are in the mix. Diverse perspectives make their presence felt within the texture of the discourse. To the extent that the subject is captured, and appropriated by what has already been said, at the same time, places of the different that what has already been said allows us to put into operation are constituted, due to the displacements of that subject’s position. Eduardo Calil underscores that “[...] there is what has already been said, and through it, the subject presents themselves as one [...], but there is also the potential for the unexpected, for rupture, as the subject is entangled by terms that constitute alternative networks of interpretations, shattering established discursive formations” (1995, p. 91). Hence, even when ensnared by what has already been articulated, which imposes itself on the subject often without their conscious awareness, the avenues to engage in alternative interpretative frameworks and reconfigure meanings facilitated by involvement in other networks or DFs are not excluded.

Within this discourse, Authier-Revuz articulates it as follows: “[...] every discourse seems intrinsically intertwined with ‘other discourses’ and with the ‘discourse of the Other’” (1998, p. 59). The ‘other’ is not an object (external, of which one speaks), but a condition (constitutive, for one to speak) of the discourse of a speaking subject who is not the primary source of that discourse. Revisiting the excerpted DS, it is apparent that in creating the effect of meaning that individuals bear responsibility for the success or failure of their trajectories, the authors acknowledge that this path may involve challenges, intricacies, setbacks, constraints, and the need to be sought out— conflicts presented in the following table:

Table 2 – THE OTHER’S DISCOURSE WITHIN THE SUBJECT’S DISCOURSE

by stating that	it is possible to comprehend that it is also being conveyed that
“so that everything goes well”	there is a potential that “everything” might not necessarily “go well,” because when it is stated that “your involvement, your engagement is fundamental,” such engagement is not presented as the sole and exclusive condition for a successful journey. Therefore, it does not guarantee success. This is a fundamental condition because without it the path is more difficult and the difficulty in achieving success is greater, but it does not mean that there is a guarantee that everything will “go well.” Individual dedication engages in dialogue with other elements entrenched in memory.
“the path may be lengthy, at times straightforward, at times challenging”	the existence of the prospect of straightforward or, at times, painful and intricate paths escapes the subject’s control over their destiny, commencing solely from “who you are to reach where you aspire to be and who you dream of becoming in the future.”
“reality may impose several constraints” “find ways”	the path must be found, but the subject may not find it, as reality may be limiting. As a “shared” realm where different discourses with diverse meanings clash, the term “path” simultaneously conveys a sense of “progressing successfully” and a sense of being disrupted due to “several constraints”: the assurance of success through individual effort is disrupted by the realities of uncertainty and difficulty.
“you can build a lifestyle that brings personal fulfillment, imbues your life with purpose, and inspires you to contribute to a fair, equitable, and dignified society for everyone.”	society is neither fair, nor equitable, nor dignified. Consequently, if these attributes are not fully present in our society, not all individuals will have the means to “build a way of life that brings them personal fulfillment, that imbues their lives with meaning, and that motivates them to contribute to a fairer, more equitable, and dignified society for all.” The tension between the unjust society in which the individual resides and their responsibility to make it more just resonates, prompting us to ponder: how, in an unjust society structured around class relations that perpetuate hierarchy and unequal distribution of rights, can the individual break free from this hierarchy and, through individual commitment, find a space to endeavor towards change? One can discern the contradiction between the market-driven discourse that intertwines with education and promises a brighter future, attainable through personal effort, which would lead to a fair, egalitarian, and dignified society, and the same market-driven discourse that regulates relationships in a hostile and unjust manner, thus undermining the individual's personal effort, as society remains neither fair, equal, nor dignified.
“opportunities to become the	if one does not seize the opportunity to assume the role of the “protagonist in their own story,” other elements will condition the paths of individual

protagonist of your own story.”	narrative construction, underscoring the existence of competing forces vying for this space.
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Source: material produced by the researchers

Here, we can also observe the mechanism of anticipation: the authors seem to empathize with their readers, trying to foresee the impact of the meaning their words will evoke. During this process, they not only endorse the meritocratic inclination that the discursive framework reaffirms, based on the market’s demands but also draw on language from other discursive frameworks to (re) enforce their positions. These discourses do not originate from these authors but from preceding external processes. Nevertheless, they establish their position and consistently aim to provoke readers to adopt a position akin to their own.

CLOSING REMARKS

In this study, our goal is to comprehend the dynamics of both stabilizing and destabilizing meanings within the sphere of education through the “discursive listening” of introductory texts from five books included in the 2021 PNLD’s Life Project. From the DSs cut out, we identified a Meritocratic DF in which discourses circulate that resonate effects of a sense of protagonism, promise of possibility, and student accountability. The unspoken elements hold a presence and absence in what is spoken, actively shaping the meaning of the words. In the dynamic interplay between what is articulated and what remains unsaid, the student’s journey is imbued with a sense of submission to the imperative of success and the risk of failure. The outcome, whether one or the other, hinges on their engagement with the possibilities presented. This underscores that, when we consider the discursive functioning of the examined linguistic markers, “[...] meaning is constructed through the relationships that various expressions uphold among themselves, within each DF, which, in turn, is influenced by the FI from which it originates” (INDURSKY, 1997, p. 32).

We not only discern a prevailing DF but also a particular discursive effort in which the student is depicted as capable of autonomy and decisions that shape their life. This portrayal, however, remains silent about the conditions of existence of these young individuals in a capitalist society marked by disparities in access to essential cultural and material resources. We reiterate the presence of other discourses that, despite conflicting with DF knowledge, contribute meanings within it, leaving behind traces of other discursive formations. There is no ritual without flaws: even within a Meritocratic DF, other voices echo that point to tensions between the meanings recognized in the presentation texts of five Life Project books. These tensions are comprehended through an analytical process that, by challenging the clarity of the discourse through the deconstruction of what appears self-evident, uncovers elements that shed light on the relationship of the text with the external context specific to it, which points to how the commitments of high school students are discursively framed by the statements that advocate for a particular organization and execution of curricular practices in schools.

The interdiscourse resonates within the intradiscourse. In essence, echoing the argument explored earlier in this article, the subject-authors of the introductory texts serve as conduits for

other forms of knowledge, influenced by pre-existing knowledge structures through their identification with a universal subject, an identification connected to the notion of a uniformity of meaning that they intend to convey while acknowledging the inevitable shifts in meaning that are impossible to constrain.

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